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CHRISTMAS CARDS.

IT is not at all likely that our friends in Boston will be without rivals in the chromo card business this winter. A Mr. Raphael Tuck, of London, has profited by their example in giving prizes for designs, and, according to the opinions of such critical journals as *The Saturday Review* and *The Spectator*, with promising results. He offered £500, to be given in fourteen prizes, the first prize being £100. We have not learned yet the names of the successful competitors, but—speaking for *THE ART AMATEUR* and its readers—we shall all be disappointed unless we have something by Miss Kate Greenaway, whose delightful little boys and girls have not yet been equalled in this country. The judges of the competition were Sir Coutts Lindsay, Mr. H. Stacey Marks, and Mr. Boughton. Pending their decision, the editor of *The Saturday Review* tells us about some of the designs and what he thinks of them.

Time, as a very old man, with a burden on his back and an hour-glass in his hand, skating gracefully on an expanse of ice, cuts upon it the figures 1881. That is one design. The corresponding one is even more clever, we are told. Time, as an aged but vigorous stone-mason, carves the same numbers on a great marble wall, whose surface is already thickly studded with the figures of recent years. One card represents Morning, a little baby playing the violin as he sways on a rich bough of apple-blossoms; the other, Night, a much more serious infant, swinging on a bat's wing, and shaking a dull torch to the stars.

Some of the designs this critic does not like at all. For instance "Some groups of horrid naked children playing at blind man's buff, and other good honest English games, which are never carried on in any well-conducted nursery by unclothed infants." He objects to horned imps on grasses, because they "have been disproved by science;" he protests shudderingly against a design which represents a cruel murder committed on the old year by the new year, and says that he would like to be enrolled among the judges were it only to flounce the expectations of certain others "which seem in their very appearance to expect the prize." This is amusing, though hardly fair; but as Mr. Critic is not to be one of the judges, no harm will be done. On the whole, it would seem that out of the thousand or more of the designs, which, from a much greater number sent in, were exhibited, some very good ones will be given the honor of reproduction, and become familiar on this side of the Atlantic.

CARPETS AND CLUBS.

DR. BIRDWOOD, in his recent work, "The Industrial Arts of India," speaking of the woven stuffs generally of the people of that country, says: "The charm of their textile fabrics lies in the simplicity and treatment of the decorative details." These details are always conventionalized arrangements of natural forms, and "are always represented quite flat, as in mosaic work, and generally symmetrically and in alternation." If you give a native a plant to copy for decorative purposes, he will "peg it down flat on the ground, laying its leaves and buds and flowers out symmetrically on either side of the central stem." In the pattern to which this form of decoration is subsequently applied "each object, or division of an object, is painted in its own proper color, but without shades of the color, or light and shade of any kind, so that the ornament looks perfectly flat, and laid like a mosaic on its ground," whereby "the natural surface of any object decorated it maintained in its integrity."

No one familiar with the first principles of decorative design will doubt the propriety of this simple and natural treatment, as opposed to the ridiculous English and French methods, ignorantly adopted in this country, of representing huge nosegays, or bunches of fern-leaves, tied together by flowing pink ribbons, in light shade, on carpets, with the effect of full relief. In India, the honored school for centuries past of surface decoration, such foolish contrasts are unknown. Harmony above all things is aimed at. In carpets, however gay in color, a low tone is secured by a general black outline of the details. All violent contrasts are avoided. The richest colors are used, but are so arranged as to produce the effect of a neutral bloom, which tones down every detail almost to the softness and transparency of atmosphere. We have seen no

English carpet which so nearly fulfils these conditions as a "Wilton," recently imported by Torrybright & Capen, of Boston, and laid in the parlors of the Lotos Club. Evidently adapted from, if not an exact copy of, an antique Indian rug—the yellow, perhaps, is more prominent than in its prototype—it is generally admirable in color and design. It is eminently proper that our social clubs which are supposed to represent the cream of refined society, should set an example of good taste in the selection of their furniture, appointments, and decoration. Unfortunately, the reverse is too often the rule. New York club men will without difficulty call to mind some conspicuous instances of costly vulgarity bearing out this assertion. The reason is not far to seek. Such matters as the selection of a carpet, which are worthy the consideration of every member—for the club, in a certain sense, is the home of each individual member—are usually left to the two or three gentlemen who compose the House Committee, who are not chosen, as they should be, with special reference to their fitness to decide on a matter of taste, and these generally delegate the whole matter to the chairman, who may know less than any of them.

Perhaps we have said more on this subject in regard to clubs than is necessary in a general article, but we feel that if we can not look to them for the exercise of sound judgment and correct taste in such matters, it is hopeless to expect to find those qualities elsewhere.

MR. WALKER'S ETCHINGS.

MR. CHARLES A. WALKER, of Boston, favors us with a communication criticising our criticism of his etching of Sarah Bernhardt. The kind purpose of the writer, we are informed, is "to correct a serious blunder" that we have made in saying that he used the ruling machine in shading the cabinet. He says that really he used nothing but "the point" in that part of his work; and now that we look at the print again, we believe him, for the ruling would certainly have been done better with a machine.

Mr. Walker seems to suppose that because we spoke of his use of the roulette on the robe of the dress that we particularly condemned it. We assure him that he is mistaken. His work would probably have been no worse without the roulette. We are glad, though, on the whole, that our comment in this matter has called forth an acknowledgment from Mr. Walker, for he makes it the occasion to inform us that the roulette has been used by Jacque, Delauney, and Rajon, a fact which otherwise we might never have known.

Our correspondent concludes his letter as follows:

"I agree with you perfectly as to the weakness of the cabinet, but in working from a poor photograph one has narrow limits and poor encouragement."

"I trust you may again have to review some future works, as I soon commence upon a commission from Joseph Jefferson to etch two large portraits of Rip Van Winkle 'Before' and 'After' the sleep, given upon the strength of the Bernhardt etching, and from far better material. Laboring under many disadvantages, I trust you will not pass final judgment thus, but rather wait for future development."

Mr. Walker is an estimable gentleman, and we do not doubt that he will succeed in life. The times are exceedingly propitious to the advancement of his peculiar style of art, and doubtless plenty of commissions are in store for him. As we have already suggested, there is not even a suspicion of talent in his productions as an etcher. But he labors industriously on his plate, and gives it the high finish and mechanical beauty which the ignorant mistake for artistic merit. This is just what the general public will buy. They understand it, and the dealers understand the public. Hence we are not at all surprised to hear that Mr. Walker has already sold his Bernhardt etching to a firm of New York picture dealers who usually are so difficult to please that they can find no American pictures worthy of a place in their art gallery—unless they are painted abroad. The substantial approval of such a house, who doubtless know what their customers want, will put money in Mr. Walker's pockets, which we fear that no conscientious criticism from our pen can ever do.

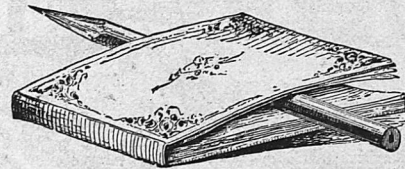
A SOCIETY of Etchers has been formed at Antwerp, with Ed. Pécher, president of the Cercle Artistique, as honorary president, and A. J. Verhoeven-Bal, painter, as president. Max Rooses, of the Musée Plantin-Moretus, is secretary. It will publish a batch of six etchings each quarter; the first set is now ready.

OUR PREMIUM ETCHING.

OUR readers will be interested to know that Mr. Charles Volkmar is making an etching especially for *THE ART AMATEUR*. It is our intention to offer it as a premium to all present subscribers sending directly to the publication office the name of some new subscriber and four dollars. As the etchings of Mr. Volkmar (to certainly none of which the new plate is inferior), published by Messrs. Herman Wanderlich & Co., sell for four or five dollars apiece, the money value of our premium may be appreciated. The subject is a landscape with cattle. The plate will be completed before the next issue of *THE ART AMATEUR*, when it will be ready for delivery. It is twelve inches long by six high, exclusive of margin, the size being specially considered with the view of binding the etching as a frontispiece to our annual volume. Due notice will be given concerning the price of proof copies of the etching on Japanese paper, of which only a limited number will be issued.

MR. G. W. FENETY, of the Decorative Art Society, of Boston, writes to us as follows:

"Mr. Wheatley's claim to a patent for underglaze painting, and Miss McLaughlin's announcement that she was the first to discover the process and put it to practical use in this country, are rather late to stand the test of the facts I give below. In the spring of 1876 Messrs. Robertson & Co., art potters, Chelsea, Mass., made and sold several hundred dollars' worth of the ware known as Bourg-la-Reine, or Limoges faïence—that is, mixing color with slip, producing a similar effect to the Haviland's. But having all the business they could attend to in their regular line, they have only made occasional pieces since then for experiment."



My Note Book.

ESPIE the lukewarm praise vouchsafed to Sarah Bernhardt by the majority of the daily press, after her début at Booth's Theatre, her success has been undoubted. The public have judged for themselves. At first, evidently influenced by the opinions of the critics, they were sparing in their applause, but, as the performance progressed, their own feelings became paramount, and the enthusiasm grew unbounded. This was notably the case on the second performance of "Adrienne Lecouvreur." At the close of the third act the applause was tumultuous, and the curtain was raised again and again on the fourth act in response to the enthusiastic recalls. One of the best points in Mlle. Bernhardt's acting in the latter scene has not been noticed in any of the criticisms that I have seen, although I was not surprised to find, in subsequent conversation with our American Bernhardt, that it was not lost on that enthusiastic admirer of the great Parisienne. I refer to the wonderful courtesy of Adrienne as she withdraws from the presence of the Princess, her rival for the heart of the man she loves. In that one obeisance, in which one could recognize the education of a lifetime, was the concentrated expression of fierce hate, wounded pride, satisfied vengeance, and reckless despair.

THE critics seemed disappointed that she did not rave and stamp about the stage, and show the robust "power" of a Janauschek or a Marie Seebach. Mlle. Bernhardt's interpretation of the rôle was an harmonious and perfectly rounded performance. She knows her art, and loves it too well to depart from the classic methods of the Théâtre Français to "split the ears of the groundlings." It was not necessary that Adrienne should shout at the Princess to express her withering scorn and hate. Her womanly dignity throughout the mental conflict of emotions, culminating in the final passage of the scene, remained supreme. Those familiar with the customs of the times would have recognized the fact that Adrienne, a mere actress,